

Mimulus Memo

California Native
Plant Society



KERN CHAPTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Finally, It Rained!

by Richard Spjut

JANUARY 2015

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EVENTS

JANUARY

- 15-17 — 2015 CNPS Conservation Conference, San Jose, CA
- 15 — Annual Chapter Potluck & Program

FEBRUARY

- 19 — Program

MARCH

- 14 — FIELD TRIP: Semitropic Ridge Preserve
- 16 — Program

PATTY GRADEK AND LUCY CLARK PLANNED AND ORGANIZED our field trips this past year. Unfortunately, we had another disappointing season of rainfall. Many field trips were cancelled. Of course, Kern County is generally dry, since much of it lies in rain shadows, as indicated by Twisselmann in his summary of the introduction to his flora: *"Kern County consists of a complex of mountains, a broad expanse of desert, and a great inland valley. While it is a region of contrasts, almost all of the county's geography, economy, and biology is that of a land of little rain."*

But finally, on December 2, it rained in Kern County. Our field trip team proposes to reschedule many of the trips they planned last year. The WSI precipitation map for Kern County on Dec. 2 shows the highest rainfall was along the Kern/Inyo County line, 1 — 2 inches, although TV reports indicated up to 2 inches fell around Lake Isabella.

One of the plants that flowers early and that we might expect to see is the desert candle (*Caulanthus inflatus*), a native species in the mustard family (*Brassicaceae*), that can light up the desert in early March. Its center of distribution is Kern County, and most of the records of this striking plant are from in and around Kern County, as shown on the next page from a clip of the Calflora map of its distribution.

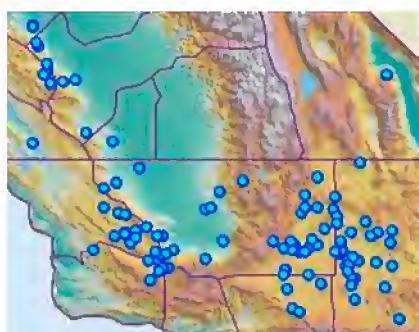
"While it is a region of contrasts, almost all of the county's geography, economy, and biology is that of a land of little rain."



Desert candle (*Caulanthus inflatus*), California City, March 2005

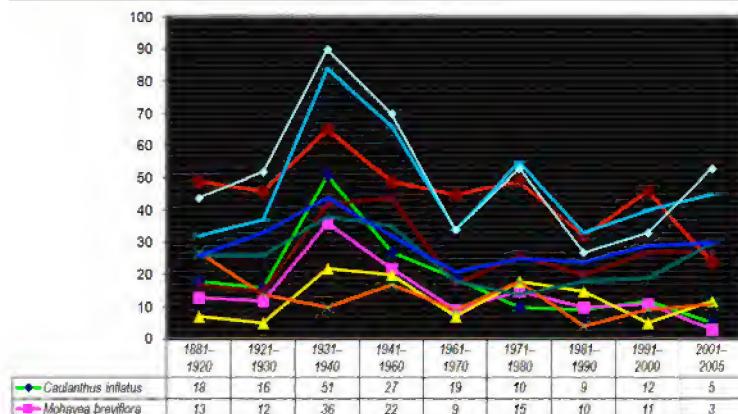
Photo by Richard Spjut.

President's Message: (Continued)



from data compiled in 2008. The figure shown below was part of a poster presentation at the **CNPS January 2009 Conference** held in Sacramento. The decline in desert candle — indicated by the green line among other native annuals — was suggested to be due to increase in off-road vehicle (ORV) recreation.

One standard selected for comparison was the white line representing collections of the morning star, *Monoptilon bellidoides*, which is in the aster family (*Asteraceae*). It grows on rocky ground where it



is less likely to be run down by ORV, and the graph shows its collecting increased since 1990. The flowers are known to open in the morning and closed in the evening, but I noted on my voucher specimen label



Photo by Richard Spjut
Morning star (*Monoptilon bellidoides*),
Death Valley National Park, March 2005.

for a 548 gram sample (dried) I collected for cancer research on 28 Feb. 2008, that the flowers closed at 11:05 A.M. After that time, it became a rare species to find.

Dorie Giragosian has been working with chapter members on organizing a poster for the upcoming **2015 CNPS Conference**, and **Lucy Clark** has been in contact with a student at the California State University of Bakersfield to increase student awareness of the CNPS. Chapter funds will be used to help pay for the student's registration and travel,

Thus, it would seem we are off to a good start for 2015. ☺

Thank you to:

Monica Tudor and **Dorie Giragosian** for the very successful Fall Plant Sale. Thanks also to the members who helped on the day of the sale.

Steve Kranyak for his enjoyable presentation, "Growing Natives in Bakersfield", at our September meeting. His presentation highlighted his experience with growing a native plant garden at his own home.

Randi McCormick for her very interesting presentation, "Natural Land Revegetation", at our October meeting. Randi described what has been learned about bringing native vegetation back to disturbed areas in the Valley.

Denis Kearns for his presentation, "The Natural History of the San Juan River Basin" at our November meeting. This is an area that many of us have not visited. He enlightened us on the vegetation, geology and archaeology of this fascinating area.

Dorie Giragosian, who represents the Kern Chapter at CNPS Chapter Council meetings throughout the year.

All of the people who offered to take on a task to keep Kern CNPS moving forward.

Evalyn Lucille Klein Farnsworth (1912-2003): Devoted Cattlewoman and Naturalist

by Nancy Nies

ON A FAMILY-OWNED RANCH SOUTHEAST OF Glennville, at an elevation of around 4,000 feet, on a steep hillside accessible only on horseback or by four-wheel drive and a half-mile walk, grows a rare native plant — *Streptanthus farnsworthianus* (Farnsworth's jewel flower) — named for the remarkable local woman who first discovered it, **Evalyn Lucille Klein Farnsworth**.

Evalyn, an only child, grew up on her family's cattle ranch near Porterville, which had its beginnings in land homesteaded in 1863 by her grandfather. (Subsequent generations added land, and today the ranch has the distinction of being one of the few ranches continuously owned and operated by the same family for over 100 years.) Evalyn rode several miles on horseback to attend grammar school at White River, and went on to graduate from Porterville High School and Porterville Junior College. During her youth, Evalyn also spent much time on the ranch, helping her hardworking parents with their ranching and cattle enterprises. It was from her parents that Evalyn inherited a love for the land and an interest in nature. Like her father, she was a keen observer of the world around her. Young Evalyn had an exceptional memory and was to become "a walking encyclopedia" of plants, animals, and nature in general, says **Sandra Southard**, her daughter.

The family ranch would be hugely significant in Evalyn's life, as she was to spend her life there as a self-employed cattlewoman and rancher. The family acquired the first registered Hereford cattle in 1931, and Evalyn and her husband Freeland Farnsworth became well-known in livestock circles for their outstanding Hereford herd, according to **Ernest Twisselmann** in his 1967 *Flora of Kern County*. It was one of the leading herds until the early 1990s, says Evalyn's daughter. A lifelong member of the American Hereford Association and the National and California Cattlewomen's Associations, Evalyn Farnsworth founded the Tulare Cattlewomen's Association and served as its first president, as well as president of the Kern County



Evalyn Lucille Klein,
Porterville High
School Yearbook,
1929

Cattlewomen's Association. She led a local beef awareness campaign that grew into a national one. On the ranch, she devised a record-keeping system which gave rise to the Cattlemen's Beef Cattle Improvement Association. Evalyn hosted ag classes from Fresno State and Cal Poly, which came to observe the ranch's operations, management, cattle, and records.

Cattle were by no means Evalyn's only interest, however. Her daughter Sandra calls her "*the most well-rounded person I have ever seen . . . interested in everything.*" She was an accomplished horsewoman. She excelled at arts, crafts, and needlework. She "*kept volumes of notes about weather conditions and would refer to earlier years for comparisons,*" says her daughter. In addition, she assisted **Eben McMillan** in his studies of condors and their habitat, in the days before the captive breeding program began.

And then there was her interest in native plants. In his *Flora*, Twisselmann acknowledged Evalyn Farnsworth's contribution of nearly 800 collections. He wrote: "*Mrs. Farnsworth has collected in the Greenhorn range since September 1962, primarily on the ranches she and her husband own at Woody, White River, and Glennville; many of her collections are made while doing range riding for the family cattle operations. Her careful botanizing along the drainage of Cedar and Lumreau creeks is an example of the value of intensive collection of a relatively small but critical area; her collections have yielded numerous Kern County and several Sierra Nevada records. Among them is the type material for the remarkable jewel flower *Streptanthus farnsworthianus*.*" Evalyn sent many letters and samples of the plant at different stages to

J. T. Howell, at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, for identification. Her *Streptanthus* finding, native and endemic to the Sierra foothills of California, was published by Dr. Howell in *Leaflets of Western Botany* 10(11):182-183 in 1965.

Roger Raiche, of the Bay Area garden-design firm Planet Horticulture, writes in his blog: "*If you want to add an annual to your garden that no one has ever seen before, one that will amaze you*



Farnsworth Jewelflower
(*Streptanthus farnsworthianus*)

Evalyn Lucille Klein Farnsworth (Continued)

every time you see it, try the Farnsworth jewel flower." He describes it as having spikes of bright white flowers, set against "a very unusual expanded bract of rose purple, overlaid with a strange bluish color that reflects the light." Favoring sterile, rocky "balds" and ledges, it has grown well on Raiche's rock outcrop. When it went to

seed, Raiche "crushed [the seed] up and sprinkled [it] around to a wider area," which resulted in good num-

"If you want to add an annual to your garden that no one has ever seen before, one that will amaze you every time you see it, try the Farnsworth jewel flower."

bers of the plant the next season. Raiche goes on to say that the plant is available by mail-order from Annie's Annuals of Richmond, CA. He credits Evalyn Farnsworth with hitting upon "one of the weirdest," but also one of the loveliest, of California's native jewel flowers.

When Evalyn died in 2003 at the age of 91, she left behind her daughter Sandra and son-in-law **Lawrence Southard** — who would like it to be known that he "thought the world of her" — two grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and the ranch to which she had devoted her life. Evalyn Farnsworth's legacy also includes a native plant bearing her name, a possibility she likely never suspected when, on 13 May 1965 on her family's ranch near Glennville, she first spotted an unusual purple-and-white plant blooming on a steep slope of decomposed slate.

Author's note: Many thanks go to **Sandra Southard**, of Porterville, for her help in providing many personal details; to **Aaron Schusteff** for his photograph of *Streptanthus farnsworthianus*; and to **Lorie Barker** of the Porterville College Library and **Annamarie Olson** of the Porterville City Library, for their assistance in obtaining photos. ☺



Streptanthus farnsworthianus,
Farnsworth jewel flower

Photo courtesy of Debra Cook



Verbena de la mina

Native Plant Gardening

by Monica Tudor

I LOVE FALL PLANT

sale time. Well, make that the time after the plant sale. This is the best (and some say the only) time of year to plant natives. Based on my own experience, I have to agree.

The cooler weather seems to be appreciated by the plants as evidenced by their growth spurt this fall. The *Aster chilensis* (California aster) got a few new blooms as did as the Allen Chickering sage. Even the *Quercus lobata* (valley oak) sprouted some twigs which grew several inches.

I had planted a new section of garden in spring this year, a full sun exposure, using the plants from the Las Pilitas field trip and the Garden Fest. They lasted

through the first set of 100 degree days but that was it. I had probably overwatered at least some of them, but others certainly looked

The hardest part?
Not watering them daily!
I check to see if they need waterIf the earth is damp, do not water.

parched right before they croaked. In any case, they did not have enough time to develop a large enough root system to sustain them through Bakersfield's extreme summer weather. The survivors: a *Verbena de la mina* and an *Isomeris arborea* (bladderpod). The verbena tolerates summer water and the bladder pod grows locally on the Panorama Vista Preserve, so it survives with NO additional summer water. Those two are good choices for the garden, too. The verbena has lilac blooms and the bladderpod has yellow blooms.

This fall, after the first rain, I followed planting directions from the Las Pilitas website as well as the hints

from **Steve Kranyak**, who was a speaker at a recent CNPS meeting.

Once the plant locations were determined, I dug large, deep holes and filled them with water. That accomplished two things: I found out how fast the water drained and put water deep into the ground as a reserve for the (soon to be growing) roots. The plants were taken from their pots, root balls examined and scored (if appropriate), then planted and watered one more time.

The hardest part? Not watering them daily! I check

to see if they need water by digging out a little dirt about an inch away from the root ball. If the earth is damp, do not water. With this weather, the ground stays moist and plants do not need lots of additional watering. I have one exception, though, and that's if seeds are planted.

Isomeris arborea, bladderpod

They'll get lightly watered when the ground appears dry, about twice a week, to encourage sprouting.

Once the plants are in the ground, I'll go check them out regularly. Are they putting out new leaves? Or are any leaves looking odd?

I had to move a recently planted *Arctostaphylos Dr. Hurd* that wasn't looking too happy. Its leaves were turning black around the edges. I'm not sure why, too much water? Soil too rich? (It was planted where the bull had lived for two years- draw your own conclusions.) Anyway, once it was moved, it started growing tiny new leaves! Now, to keep it and the others alive through the next summer! ☺



Chapter Meetings upcoming TOPICS

Thursday, January 15, 2015

6-7 pm: ANNUAL POTLUCK,
(Regular informal group discussions
cancelled to allow time for potluck)

7 pm: Richard Spjut,
Western Australian Wildflowers.
Western Australia has a Mediterranean climate similar to California's and a spectacular variety of wildflowers. In the 80s and 90s Rich sampled 850 plant species for botanical research sponsored by the National Cancer Institute.

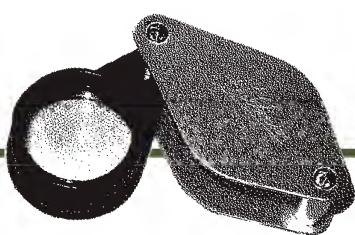
Thursday, February 19, 2015 7 pm:
Speaker: David Chipping, CNPS
Fellow, Emeritus Professor of
Geology, VP, Friends of the Carrizo
Plain, will speak on a subject relative
to the Carrizo Plain. Title to be
announced.

All chapter meetings are held the 3rd Thursday of each month at the Hall Ambulance Community Room 1031 21st Street (21st & N St.), Bakersfield, CA.

Meeting times:

6 pm — Two informal discussion groups: *Plant Identification* and *Native Plant Gardening*

7 pm — Program presentation



FIELD TRIPS

by Lucy Clark and Patty Gradek

KERN CNPS FIELD TRIPS ARE OPEN TO ALL. Occasionally, numbers will be limited by the land owners or agencies. We welcome you to join us to see and learn about our native plants and their habitats, to learn to identify plants, or to photograph them. If you are skilled in plant identification, you can help us all learn.

For the past two years we have had to cancel several planned field trips due to dry conditions. We're hopeful we will have normal rainfall this year and be able to plan several field trips to see some excellent wildflower displays. At this time, we have several field trips in the planning stage, including Saturday or Sunday trips to **Carrizo Plain National Monument**, the **Mill Creek area** on the **Sequoia National Forest**, the **Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge**, and **Nature Conservancy Properties** near Bakersfield. We're keeping the plans flexible, depending on the rainfall we receive. We have other potential trips in mind for weekend dates, as well as possible mid-week trips, if it's a good rainfall season.

Keep your eyes open for specific field trip locations and dates in the next *Mimulus Memo* which will be distributed in March. Depending on the bloom, March field trips are possible on the Valley floor, lower Rancheria Road, and China Gardens (Kern Canyon). These and mid-week field trips will be on the KCNPS website and **Andy Honig** will send out email notifications.

The following March 14th trip is firm:

March 14, Saturday

SEMITROPIC RIDGE PRESERVE
(and possibly PIXLEY VERNAL POOLS)
Contact: Lucy Clark – lucyg391@gmail.com
RSVP Deadline: 8 pm, Thursday, March 12th

The **Semitropic Ridge Preserve** is a patchwork of lands in the southern San Joaquin Valley, which saves habitat for many endangered species, such as the Tipton Kangaroo Rat, Blunt-nosed Leopard Lizard, San Joaquin Kit Fox, etc. It also happens to protect many of our Valley plants which otherwise have been plowed under. These lands are protected by the Center for Natural Lands Management. The preserves will be scouted the week before to see if there are sufficient species to warrant our gas and our Saturday. If there has been no water for the Pixley Preserve, we will try for a half-day trip. If Pixley is in its wonderful spring concentric blooms, we will make it an all day affair. At any rate, plan on a snack, at least! A "Go" or "No-Go" notice will be e-mailed to all after

the scouting trip. This will be a drive-and-walk trip, with opportunities to practice keying with our Jepson manuals (or someone else's!).

We will meet at 7:30 am to form carpools behind the Del Taco on Merle Haggard between Hwy 65 and 99, in the far back parking lot. Coming from the south up Hwy 99, you will need to exit at Hwy 65. We will leave as soon as all who RSVPed gather.

Please contact Lucy at the above address to RSVP.

Other field trips below are possibilities with tentative dates, dependent on rain and bloom times. Further details about these trips with firmer dates will become available in the March newsletter.

March 7, Saturday

VALLEY FRINGE PORTION of TEJON RANCH

April 4, Saturday

CARRIZO PLAIN NATIONAL MONUMENT

April 19, Sunday

MILL CREEK off OLD KERN CANYON ROAD



Tejon Ranch looking southward — 2014 trip.

photo courtesy David Campbell

April ?

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY PROPERTIES

April 25, Saturday

BITTER CREEK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

May ?

HIGHER ELEVATION PORTIONS
of TEJON RANCH

May 30, Saturday

TEJON RANCH BIOBLITZ!
(See below)

June 6, Saturday
 OLD STAGE ROAD,
 GREENHORN BURN AREA

Mark your calendars for **Saturday, May 30th** when there will be a *Bioblitz* at the Tejon Ranch, Cattani Ranch, and the Nature Conservancy ranches in the Caliente region! Details will be provided when they are made available.

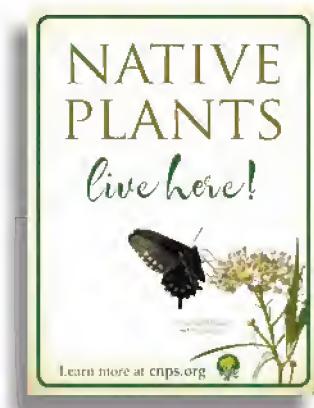
As in the past, all trips that we plan will be by reservation only, so we know whom to expect, and how many will be attending. Each trip listed in the next Mimulus Memo or described in an email from Andy Honig will have a contact person listed. **We ask that you email the contact person by two days before the field trip and indicate the names of those who will attend and, if possible, a cell phone number where we can reach you that day.**



Garden Signs Now Available

CNPS NOW OFFERS 'Native Plants Live Here' garden signs. This project seeks to engage the public in native plant gardening by allowing people to display the signs in their home and public gardens. Signs are \$36.00 and can be purchased at the CNPS online store.

Chapters were given a sign at Chapter Council in December. Please put your chapter sign in a public place or prominent garden to help spread the word! Please send a photo of your sign in its new home to dkennelly@cnps.org. A Garden Sign Toolkit with further information is available on the admin page of cnps.org under "Chapter Toolkits" ☀.



PlantRight™ Spring Nursery Survey **Survey Purpose:**



A SPRING NURSERY SURVEY IS conducted each year by **PlantRight™** — an organization promoting noninvasive plants in California — in collaboration with the **UC Master Gardener Program** and other groups gathering information about the retail market for invasive plants in California. This information allows **PlantRight™** to:

- ◆ Collaborate effectively with thousands of plant retailers, wholesalers and growers;
- ◆ Provide gardeners with information about invasive plants, and choosing beautiful non-invasive alternatives for their gardens;
- ◆ Inform our strategy, measure progress, and keep their plant list relevant.

For specific questions about the annual survey and how to get involved, please email them at PlantRight@suscon.org.

The **6th Annual Spring Nursery Survey** is being conducted from **February through June of 2015**, and they are seeking help! Participation is easy, educational, and fun. You can register to be a survey volunteer at: www.plantright.org/survey-registration

Volunteers will:

- ◆ View an online presentation (webinar)
- ◆ Download required survey materials
- ◆ Sign up to survey a store in their area
- ◆ Visit the store and record information about any invasive plants sold there
- ◆ Submit the information to PlantRight

On average, the entire process takes about two and a half hours to complete. Some people choose to work with other volunteers. Returning volunteers may choose to view the full webinar, or a shorter refresher video.

They will be hosting webinars for both Southern California (San Luis Obispo, Kern and San Bernardino counties and south) and Northern California (north of these counties). ☀

Contacts:

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CALIFORNIA
NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

The Kern Chapter of the California Native Plant Society meets the third Thursday of each month at Hall Ambulance Community Room, 1013 21st St. (21st & N St), Bakersfield, CA. Chapter Website: kern.cnps.org

*The California Native Plant Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of California native plants and their natural habitats, and to increasing the understanding, appreciation, and horticultural use of native plants. CNPS has 31 chapters throughout the state and membership is open to all persons – professional and amateur – with an interest in California's native plants. Members have diverse interests including natural history, botany, ecology, conservation, photography, drawing, hiking and gardening. As a Kern County resident, your membership includes *Fremontia*, a quarterly journal with articles on all aspects of native plants; *The Bulletin*, a statewide report of activities and schedules; and *The Mimulus Memo*, the newsletter of the Kern Chapter.*

Join CNPS or renew your membership online at www.cnps.org.

Student/Limited Income – \$25
Individual – \$45
Family or Library – \$75



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HEROES OF BOTANY
2015 FIELD TRIPS
NATIVE PLANT GARDENING
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE